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'The Pictures … Are Even More Stark Than the Prose' (*Sheffield Telegraph*, 2 December 1937): word and image in Walter Greenwood and Arthur Wragg's *The Cleft Stick* (1937)

CHRIS HOPKINS

ABSTRACT Walter Greenwood is well known for his novel *Love on the Dole* (1933), which is remembered as the iconic British novel of the Depression, selling over forty-six thousand copies and being seen as a play by some three million people in Britain. *Love on the Dole* was regarded as authentic testimony from a working-class author who had experienced unemployment—an experience which in fact gave him the time to write. He did not begin by writing a novel, but by writing short stories about working-class life intended for fiction magazines. However, only one of these stories was accepted. It was not until 1937 that Greenwood published all the original short stories in a format very different from that first envisaged. They appeared in *The Cleft Stick* (1937), a co-produced book with the artist Arthur Wragg, who drew a monochrome illustration for each story, as well as the illustrated dust-wrapper. Both Greenwood and Wragg had a certain celebrity status as working-class artists, and the book sold well. Neither word nor image in *The Cleft Stick* has received any critical attention since its contemporary reviews, yet was widely written about then as a controversial prequel or sequel to *Love on the Dole*, and regarded as an important contribution to socially aware art in Britain and the United States. *The Cleft Stick* has not been reprinted since 1937, but it was an important working-class literary/artistic collaboration that should be rediscovered and reintroduced into critical conversations about the 1930s, artistic, literary and political.

KEYWORDS Walter Greenwood, Arthur Wragg, working class, illustration

Walter Greenwood is well-known for his novel *Love on the Dole* (1933), which is remembered as the iconic British novel of the Depression. By 1940 it had sold some forty-six thousand copies in Britain, and had been seen in a stage adaptation by some three million people.[1] *Love on the Dole* was often regarded as authentic testimony from a working-class author who had experienced unemployment in Salford between 1929 and 1933. Indeed, it was unemployment (and the typewriter which he removed from his last place of employment in lieu of wages) that gave him the opportunity to write.[2] However, he did not begin by writing a novel, but by writing short stories about working-class life intended for fiction magazines. However, only one of these stories was accepted ('A Maker of Books'), earning him twenty-five guineas in 1931, enough, he said, to live on for six months.[3] When Greenwood wrote to the successful popular novelist Ethel Mannin for help, she advised him to turn the short stories into a novel if he wished to

1 – For a fuller account of *Love on the Dole*, see Chris Hopkins, *Walter Greenwood's Love on the Dole: Novel, Play, Film* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018).

2 – For Greenwood's memoir, see Walter Greenwood, *There Was a Time* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), 199.

3 – Walter Greenwood, 'A Maker of Books', *The Storyteller Magazine*, 11–27; Greenwood, *There Was a Time*, 215.

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make a living as a writer. This he did, reworking the stories to produce *Love on the Dole* in 1933.[4]

It was not until 1937 that Greenwood published the original short stories in a form very different from that first envisaged. They appeared in a lavish edition called *The Cleft Stick*, which was a co-produced and highly illustrated work with the artist Arthur Wragg. By this time both Greenwood and Wragg had a certain celebrity status as working-class authors, and the book sold well.[5] Wragg had published several illustrated works, often with highly original and strikingly contemporary versions of Christian themes. These included the controversial *Psalms for Modern Life* in 1933, which juxtaposed the texts of the Psalms with his stark black-and-white drawings of contemporary life, and *Jesus Wept* of 1934, either of which might have attracted Greenwood's attention for their illustrations of the unemployment, poverty, and dereliction of 1930s' Britain. Neither word nor image in *The Cleft Stick* has received any critical attention, yet it was widely and mainly favourably reviewed as a controversial sequel to *Love on the Dole*, and was regarded as an important contribution to 1930s' socially aware art, selling well in Britain and the United States. As Andy Croft remarked, his mission was 'a contribution to the process of restoration, to help make forgotten achievements known […] to lengthen the reading lists, widen the syllabuses, open the book-boxes of the canon'.[6] The present study adds a further contribution about a particularly important forgotten work of the period.

Indeed, if *Love on the Dole* were the most widely read and celebrated book about British working-class life in the 1930s, *The Cleft Stick* was not far behind, and it also further extended, what we might now term in Britain, the 'reach' and 'significance' of Greenwood's first novel by keeping its author in the news and by associating him with the artist Wragg, who was equally newsworthy. As shall be shown, many reviewers also thought that *The Cleft Stick* showed considerable development, giving a different and darker vision of British working-class life than did *Love on the Dole* (though, in 1935, the British Board of Film Censors considered *Love on the Dole* itself already far too pessimistic to be made into a film).[7] It is a rather extraordinary piece of critical neglect that while *Love on the Dole* retains its place as *the* British working-class novel of the 1930s, there has been little interest shown in the rest of its author's writing from that decade (he published three further novels before 1940).[8] It seems that Greenwood is often not really considered as a literary 'author' at all, with a personal writing history or œuvre or artistic development worthy of critical exploration—instead his most famous novel has perhaps been largely left to stand alone as if it were simply eye-witness testimony to the Depression rather than a *text* deploying its own devices and constructing its own ideological and cultural interventions. Moreover, *The Cleft Stick* is not even just another work of working-class fiction from the 1930s by the author of *Love on the* Dole: as shall be seen from its textual history, it is in fact a work a text intimately connected to *Love on the Dole*, for which it may be seen as either prequel or sequel or even as something like the *ur* version of what became *Love on the Dole*. In short, if we are interested in *Love on the Dole* and working-class writing, we certainly should be interested in *The Cleft Stick* too. Ignoring Greenwood's first

4 – 'Author's Preface', in Walter Greenwood, *The Cleft Stick* (London: Selwyn & Blount, 1937), 7–9, at 9.

5 – Judy Brook, *Arthur Wragg: 20th Century Artist, Prophet and Jester* (Bristol: Sansom, Bristol, 2002), 11–35. There is a very brief reference to *The Cleft Stick* on p. 88.

6 – Andy Croft, *Red Letter Days—British Fiction in the 1930s* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 10.

7 – British Film Institute (BFI), London, Reuben Library, British Board of Film Censors' Report 1936/42.

8 – A recent article has, however, begun to recover the significance of Greenwood's second novel; Phil O'Brien, '"Too much preoccupied with dole and dolour": Walter Greenwood's Search for the Radical and the Popular in *His Worship the Mayor*', *Literature & History* 27, no. 1 (2018): 28–46.

attempt at representing working-class Salford (or second, depending how we see the relationship of the two texts) is somewhat like failing to be interested in the differences between the First Quarto, the Second Quarto and the First Folio of *Hamlet*. There is an article to be written about the differences between Greenwood's representations of Hanky Park in *Love on the Dole* and *The Cleft Stick*, but for the present it seems most immediately important to bring *The Cleft Stick* into critical conversations in its own right, and to explore its striking status as a collaborative text by Greenwood and Wragg (whose important visual work is also unjustly neglected) in which word and image are equally significant in their depiction of a working-class community in the 1930s. While pointing to some differences between *Love on the Dole* and *The Cleft Stick*, this article will mainly explore the character of this collected version of Greenwood's first stories about working-class Salford and the ways in which Wragg interpreted and added to this depiction through his drawings, as well as tracing the contemporary reception of what was thought at the time an important artistic, social and political work. Overall, this article will argue that bringing *The Cleft Stick* back into the critical conversation will alter and expand our understanding of Greenwood, of Wragg and of the public conversations of the time about how British working-class culture should be represented and understood.

I have in this article generally regarded *The Cleft Stick* stories as earlier versions of material, some of which was later redeveloped into *Love on the Dole*, following Greenwood's clear information in his preface about the dates of the composition of the individual stories. However I also note that the collaborative composition of the individual stories into the whole story collection together with the images should be regarded as a piece of new creative collaborative work dating to 1935–36. On the whole, reviewers tended to see the collection as a development of *Love on the Dole*. In their advertising campaign the publishers, Selwyn & Blount, certainly drew attention to co-production and the already established celebrity of both the book's makers by printing their names in a large bold type, with the titles of their recent books underneath, and with the underlined heading: 'A Brilliant Collaboration.' They also quoted from a review in the south Wales newspaper the *Western Mail* that emphasized the co-operative nature of the work: 'Remarkable for the grim power and stark reality of the stories, and for the tremendously gripping drawings.'[9] By 11 December 1937, they had replaced the *Western Mail* review quotation with an even more positive response from Edith Sitwell, asserting that *The Cleft Stick* is 'A wonderful book. It contains two of the greatest short stories that have been produced in a hundred years—I don't mean in England, I mean in the world. Arthur Wragg is an enrichment of one's life.'

The Sunday Times' own reviewer, L. A. Pavey, was less impressed by the aesthetics of Greenwood's stories. His review, under the title 'Life in Mean Streets', said: 'They are not great stories […] are perhaps bald, and there are no unusual merits in Mr Greenwood's style.' However, as was so often the case with earlier reviewers of *Love on the Dole*, he attributed to the stories a power deriving from bearing authentic witness: 'They get home because he shirks nothing, and finally renders down his material into a series of social documents of value'; 'he is faithful to his

9 – Anon., advertisement in *The Sunday Times* 21 November 1937, 9; Anon., advertisement in *Times Literary Supplement* 11 December 1937, issue 1871, 940.

aim of representing life below the poverty line, a life that has lost its joy and meaning' (Pavey makes specific reference to 'The Cleft Stick' and 'Magnificat' as well as three other stories: 'The Little Gold Mine', 'The Son of Mars' and 'The Practised Hand').[10] Leonora Eyles, in the *Times Literary Supplement* (who had favourably reviewed *Love on the Dole* in the same publication), wrote another positive review under the similar title 'In Mean Streets'. She draws attention to the way in which the stories allow the reader access to 'life lived in a way that seems alien, though it is almost next door to many of us', but expresses the reservation that 'much of the material is the same from which his novel was taken, and thus loses the novelty of impact'. Overall, though, she feels that 'there is considerable power […] in each of these stories; they are raw, terrible and depressing'. Eyles also picks out 'The Cleft Stick' for specific praise: 'the irony […] of the story of a woman worn out who has no money to put in the lethal gas oven, strikes very true'. She commends the more recently written story 'Any Bread, Cake or Pie?', and, like Pavey, highlights 'A Son of Mars' and 'The Practised Hand', 'which is a masterly piece of work; it shows the author at his best, unsentimental, sincere and merciless'.[11] The *Manchester Guardian* reviewer, Thomas Moult, described 'the art of Mr Greenwood as ruthless':

10 – L. A. Pavey, 'Life in Mean Streets', *The Sunday Times* 12 December 1937, 8.

11 – Leonora Eyles, 'In Mean Streets', *Times Literary Supplement* 18 December 1937, issue no. 1872, 963.

> if there is happiness or even health in these by-streets of drab cottages […] only relieved in their monotony by gin palaces, poverty-blighted shops, factories and smoke-stacks, he does not perceive it, nor will his artistic conscience allow him […] any such thing as a Dickens-like twist into a twinkle or a smile.

He refers specifically to only one story—'The Practised Hand'—in his discussion of Greenwood's contribution, saying that 'few modern short stories can compare' for their use of the macabre. However, Moult ends his review by commenting in some detail on the contribution of Wragg's drawings, and in fact here refers to a further six identifiable stories, of which 'Magnificat' is one:

> Mr Wragg is an admirable collaborator. He emphasises with a most sympathetic touch the tragedy of the toilers, honest and shiftless, the knockers-up, millgirls, small shopkeepers, street bookmakers, insurance touts, and all the borderline folk who infest the author's […] fifteen stories, and every powerfully penned line by Mr Wragg points unerringly to the destiny of the mob. The volume is produced in a way that enhances the value of letter press and pictures alike'.[12]

12 – Thomas Moult, 'Tales of Lancashire and Ulster: *The Cleft Stick* by Walter Greenwood, *The Tales of Mourne* by Richard Rowley', *Manchester Guardian* 12 December 1937, 7.

The 'millgirls' must refer to 'Magnificat', while the 'knockers-up' refers to 'Joe Goes Home'; 'small shopkeepers' probably refers to both 'The Little Gold Mine' and '"All's Well That Ends Well"'; the 'street bookmakers' refers to 'A Maker of Books'. The most puzzling reference is to 'the insurance touts', since there is no story about insurance salesmen, but this may be a further reference to 'A Practised Hand' since it is about a killing linked to life insurance. Moult was clearly impressed—perhaps aesthetically more by Wragg's drawing than by Greenwood's narrative. However, his distaste for the pessimistic quality of the collection also keeps seeping into his prose. The characters 'infest' the stories and drawings, even the toilers are 'shiftless' and, despite being a *Manchester Guardian* writer, he sees all the

deprived inhabitants of Hanky Park depicted here as 'borderline folk' (presumably on the border between respectable and unrespectable?).

Moult's response suggests that some reviewers found *The Cleft Stick*'s portrayal of Hanky Park a more disturbing one than that found in *Love on the Dole*. Indeed, a contrast between the relative optimism of *Love on the Dole* (in its play version in this case) and the excessive pessimism of the short stories is explicitly drawn out in a review (titled 'Harrowing') by 'C. B. L' in *The Sheffield Telegraph*. The review begins by comparing the stories to the work of the renaissance dramatists Thomas Dekker, John Ford, William Rowley and Thomas Heywood in portraying 'sordid and brutal mentalities': 'There is some good in everyone, but in writing these stories Mr Greenwood preferred to ignore this first point in the humanities. In the play […] this factor received its due respect'. Nevertheless, again despite some distaste, the reviewer accepts the collection as having a raw power, and as being fiction rather than political didacticism:

> For all that, these stories, whose people never rise beyond the intellectual heights of the cinema, who depend on pawnshops, who live in 'pubs' and whose lives are completely and finally crushed, constitute an indictment much heavier than any propaganda treatment.[13]

It is notable that the reviewer deplores the mental and cultural lives of the stories' subjects, as much as their material poverty. The review goes on to praise the images: 'Mr Greenwood could not have had a finer artist than Arthur Wragg […] his drawings are even more stark than the prose, and the book is worth having for this alone.' Some reviews discussed only Greenwood's texts, but most saw image and story as equal contributions, though a smaller number rated Wragg's contribution most highly:

> What he [Greenwood] puts down in plain black and white has less of the blackness of evil and the blinding white light of truth than those pictures by Mr Wragg [… his] portrait of the woman who is too poor even to die by turning on the gas is […] even more tragic and terrible than the tale it illustrates.[14]

Most attempts at analysing the power of the drawings (after all these were fiction rather than art reviewers) picked out the impact of Wragg's sharply contrasted use of black ink on white paper in his monochrome images. Thus, the then very well-known Yorkshire novelist Phyllis Bentley in her *Yorkshire Post* review comments that the 'drawings are less illustrations than symbolic expressions of the theme by the use of bold masses of black [which] imparts a startling dramatic quality to the incident thus illuminated'.[15] As was the case for *Love on the Dole*, and despite its darker tone, *The Cleft Stick* was commended by a notable range of newspapers with quite varied political perspectives and interests. These included, for example, *The Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, *London Mercury*, *Daily Despatch*, *Catholic Herald*, *Jewish Chronicle*, and *Time and Tide*. There were some dissenting voices that disliked the stories and/or drawings, and/or doubted the political power of the collection. H. E. Bates argued in *John o'London's Weekly* that Greenwood did not show the same skills in the short-story form as he had in the novel, and, while giving some grudging praise to Wragg, fundamentally disapproves of words and images being used together: '[the illustrations] are perfectly apt to the text, having the same

13 – Signed 'C. B. L.', 'Harrowing', *The Sheffield Telegraph* 2 December 1937. The review seems to borrow some verbatim phrases from the *Daily Dispatch* review 'Grim Stories of Life on the Dole', *Daily Dispatch* 11 November 1937, 9, also repr. in Sheffield *Daily Independent* 23 November 1937, 6, both signed by H. S. Woodham.

14 – Signed 'A.', 'The Pinch of Poverty', *The Liverpool Daily Post* 19 January 1938; in Greenwood's press clippings book, Salford University Archives, Walter Greenwood Collection, Vol. 1, WGC/3/1, 141. The newspaper page number is not present in the clipping.

15 – Phyllis Bentley, 'Modern, Savage and [?]' (the third word of the title has been clipped), *Yorkshire Post* 24 November 1937; in Greenwood's press clippings book, Vol. 1, WGC/3/1, 144. The newspaper page number is not present in the clipping.

black and white crudity […] but this does not change my belief that a short story should illustrate itself'.[16] One US review seems to have felt that aspects of the collaboration undermined the political function of the book: 'the unfortunate artiness of the dust cover goes a long way to lessening the attractiveness of a book which, inside its covers, possesses merits all too rare in modern proletarian short stories'.[17] Another US review also implies that the attractive format of the book (and its price?) is inappropriate for its working-class subject matter: 'cooed over by the rich and repudiated by left-wingers […] the reader is left quite cold'.[18] Some reviews certainly did suggest that the book was collectable for its aesthetic appeal, but I have not found much 'left-wing repudiation' beyond these two reviews, most US responses being favourable. The former 'Bright Young Thing' and then leftist convert, Brian Howard, felt the book was undidactic, quite radical and potentially politically persuasive:

> As stories they are too savage, and too Left, for the popular press; yet the morals they point are not bludgeoned into the reader […] imaginative, unideological, stimulating yet truthful, the volume would make a splendid Christmas present for persons who need an effective first push to the Left.[19]

In his 'Author's Preface' to *The Cleft Stick*, Greenwood includes, among other reflections, this account of the striking book's origins and the leading role of Wragg:

> Editors of popular magazines, whom I considered ought to have been proud to have included these stories in their pages, thought differently, though all were generous in their praise, one of them actually paying twenty-five guineas for the privilege of printing one. I was invited to write football stories, but, not having any feeling for such subjects, the effort would have been a waste of time.
>
> Miss Ethel Mannin, a complete stranger to me at the time, was good enough to read the collection and to advise me to write a novel using some of the characters. I followed her advice, and *Love on the Dole* was the consequence.
>
> Had it not been for a holiday in Cornwall last year when I spent a good deal of time in the company of my friend Arthur Wragg, the artist, I guess the short stories comprising most of this volume would still be in their brown-paper parcel.[20]

A slightly different—and earlier—origin story is contained in a letter from Wragg to the pacifist leader Canon Dick Sheppard about the leading Labour politician Sir Stafford Cripps' initial part in *A Cleft Stick*:

> I like Cripps […] for instance, he got Walter Greenwood and self together to make and do a book together, and it was fixed up at his house. I invited W. G. here this summer to plan it out, and […] told him he could come as long as he liked as soon as he had finished his film. […] That was three months ago and I have heard nothing more. […] Cripps writes back and says that W.G. is in danger of having his head turned by success and that I must keep him to the mark. I think this is a very kindly thing of Cripps to do, especially as he asks me to remember what obscurity in the past must mean to anyone like W. G. once success comes. […] Cripps is afraid that a fine mentality, which W. G. has, is meeting too many people in film and in theatre.[21]

16 – H. E. Bates, 'Mr Greenwood's Stories of Mean Streets', *John o'London's Weekly* 3 December 1937; in Greenwood's press clippings book, Vol. 1, WGC/3/1, 141. The newspaper page number is not present in the clipping.

17 – Signed 'J. C.', 'Excellent Account of Very Poor Found in *The Cleft Stick*', *New Haven and Connecticut Register* 23 October 1938; in Greenwood's press clippings book, Vol. 2, WGC/3/2, 6. The newspaper page number is not present in the clipping.

18 – John Hersey, 'More Than Love on the Dole', *New York Herald Tribune* 23 September 1938; in Greenwood's press clippings book, Vol. 2, WGC/3/2, 25. The newspaper page number is not present in the clipping.

19 – From an unidentified and undated clipping in Greenwood's press clippings book, Vol. 1, WGC 3/3, 142. The newspaper page number is not present in the clipping.

20 – 'Author's Preface', in *The Cleft Stick*, 9.

21 – Victoria and Albert Museum Archives, London, Papers of Arthur Wragg, AAD/2004/8, R45.

The film referred to was *No Limit* (1935), starring George Formby as a TT motorbike racer, for which Greenwood had written the story. Cripps was perhaps anxious that the attractions of both celebrity and what he may have looked down on as merely commercial forms of entertainment might distract Greenwood from more serious kinds of (socialist?) writing about his own working-class background (though, as Ben Harker has pointed out, the story of *No Limit*, while comic, is that of a working-class man's success against the odds).[22] It is anyway notable to see such a prominent Labour politician acting as a patron to Greenwood and Wragg, and apparently creating the conditions for them to start their collaboration. Certainly, *The Cleft Stick* project made Greenwood revisit his earlier writing about working-class life in Hanky Park in collaboration with Wragg, whose phrase 'make and do a book together' may suggest just how thoroughly he saw this as a joint artistic production.

22 – Ben Harker, 'Adapting to the Conjuncture—Walter Greenwood, History and *Love on the Dole*', *Keywords—A Journal of Cultural Materialism* 7 (2009): 55–72, 65.

In form, *The Cleft Stick* is a 220-page collection of fifteen short stories, accompanied by sixteen illustrations, of which twelve are full double-page images and four are full single-page images (the illustrations appearing on unnumbered pages). Thus, each story has one accompanying illustration, apart from the final one, 'The Old School', which has two—and is in fact not strictly a story, but is, as it is subtitled, 'an autobiographical fragment' (212). There is in addition a three-page 'Author's Preface'. Of the fifteen short stories, twelve date to the period of unemployment when Greenwood first started writing—that is, from 1928 to 1931—while the autobiographical fragment was first published in Graham Greene's anthology *The Old School* (1935).[23] The two remaining stories, 'Patriotism' and 'Any Bread, Cake or Pie?', Greenwood states in his Preface, 'are of recent vintage' and are thus clearly written after *Love on the Dole* (1933).[24] To the in-text illustrations should also be added the illustrated endpapers, the embossed images on the front boards, and the image on front of the dust-wrapper, making nineteen different pictorial contributions by Wragg, each a piece of new work on his part in response to Greenwood's mainly already created texts. The preface refers to the short stories as a 'collection' ('Miss Ethel Mannin was good enough to read the collection',).[25] however we should not necessarily read this as meaning that the separate short stories were always envisaged as an artistic whole—the word 'collection' may have a more literal sense here in referring to the 'shabby brown-paper parcel' of stories (nearly) all rejected by magazines. In the period when Greenwood and Wragg worked together on making the book, aspects such as the sequencing of stories so as to form a whole and their punctuation by images were presumably (though we must guess) developed in tandem.

23 – Graham Greene, *The Old School* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1935).

24 – 'Author's Preface', in *The Cleft Stick*, 9. Page references will subsequently be given in parentheses in the text.

25 – Ibid., 9.

Certainly, at any rate, some unifying features of the book's design stem from visual features, and particularly the first impression of the book given to the reader by the dust-wrapper and the end-papers. The dust-wrapper perhaps takes its starting point partly from the design of the dust-wrapper for Cape's first edition of *Love on the Dole*, which placed the title, subtitle and author's name against a notably modernist and stylized Art Deco image of a factory with multiple chimneys.[26] The dust-wrappers of Greenwood's first three novels—*Love on the Dole* (1933), *His Worship the Mayor* (1934) and *Standing Room Only* (1936), all published by Cape—share design features, using

26 – I have not been able to locate a copyright holder for J. Z. Atkinson's work and so cannot reproduce an image of this dust-wrapper design. It measured 20.0 × 13.3 centimetres.

a black title font conceived as part of the minimalist black/red or black/yellow line-illustrations, and look as if they are the work of the same designer. In fact, the dust wrapper of the third novel, *Standing Room Only*, is signed by J. Z. Atkinson, but he has not previously been identified as the designer for *Love on the Dole* and *His Worship the Mayor*. Given the emphasis in the novel on the nineteenth-century style of poverty, which still persists in Hanky Park, and the concomitant pollution ('the houses remain: streets of them where the blue-grey smoke swirls down like companies of ghosts from a million squat chimneys'; 12), this image might seem inappropriately modern and indeed clean, with its sharply linear black design against an expanse of cream background. An explanation for this choice might partly be that the illustration is inspired by a particular section in the novel—when the young Harry Hardcastle imagines a glorious future as a qualified engineer at Marlowe's works and achieves a dynamic futurist vision of its chimneys:

> a double row of six smaller chimneys thrust up their steel muzzles like cannon trained on air raiders. Tongues of flame shot up, fiery sprites, kicking their flaming skirts about for a second then diving again as instantly as they appeared. (20)

However, as we read on further into the novel and as Harry finds out, this turns out to be an illusion of his future, for in fact at the end of his apprenticeship only long-term unemployment waits, rather than mastery of machines and productivity. Moreover, in the text Harry's moment of futurism is immediately preceded by a different account of chimneys: 'Three huge chimneys challenged the lowering sky; three banners of thick black smoke gushed forth […] swirling, billowing, expanding as they drifted […] to merge imperceptibly into the dirty sky' (20).

The Cleft Stick dust-wrapper is more like this second representation of industry—and surely showing less obviously decorative 'artiness', to pick up the US reviewer's term, than the first edition of *Love on the Dole*. *The Cleft Stick* wrapper displays a much less clean-cut version of industrial chimneys than does the dust-wrapper of *Love on the Dole*. In this case, we see only the upper part of the chimney, as if a larger overview were not possible, and instead of the stark opposition between black building and cream background, there is a blending of the fore-grounded chimney into the background, since both are built up of a multitude of brown marks on a cream background, indeed showing an imperceptible merging of smoke and sky. Where the chimneys of *Love on the Dole*'s cover put out no smoke, this single chimney fills the whole atmosphere with smuts (figure 1).

While the *Love on the Dole* cover mainly depends on a sharp black/cream colour contrast, it also uses a third clearly contrasting colour—red—to draw attention to two words in the title ('Love' and 'Dole') and to the subtitle, contained within a red three-quarters complete circle (resembling a letter C), which may suggest a section through the factory, perhaps implying the closer insight the novel will offer into the people within. *The Cleft Stick* cover instead sticks purely to a monochrome colour scheme of black on cream paper, and here the title and authors' names are the only parts of the image devoid of dark 'specks'—nevertheless, even their letters are heavily shaded above, as if soot has settled on their solid upper edges.

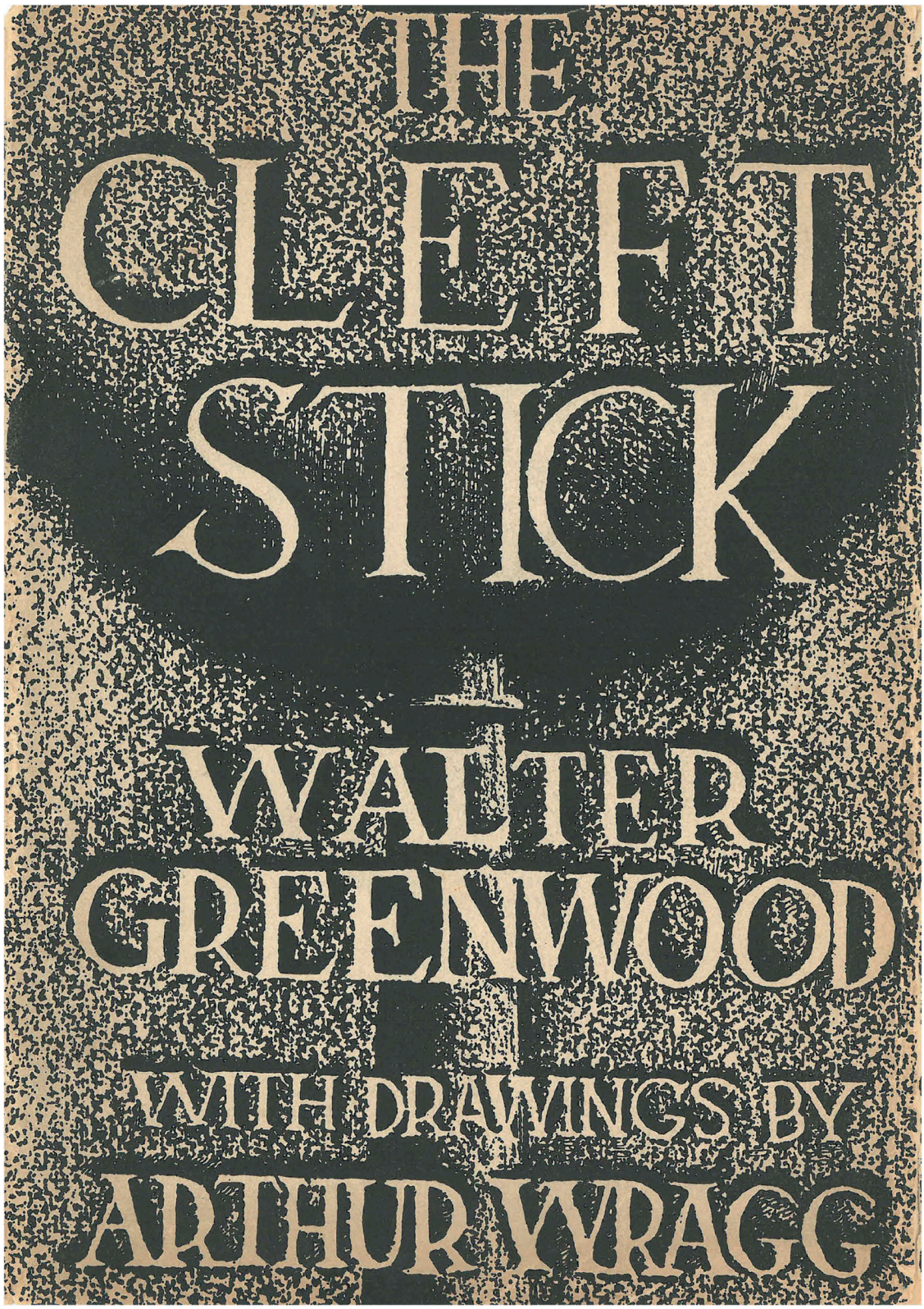

Figure 1. Printed dust-wrapper for Walter Greenwood and Arthur Wragg, *The Cleft Stick* (London: Selwyn & Blount, 1937). 25.5 × 17.5 centimetres.

The title itself seems to have emerged from the chimney and it is notable that instead of a vertical plume of smoke we get a bowl-shaped and dark emission which, seen against the title, offers the most extreme contrast on the cover between light and dark, and also contains the words 'The Cleft Stick', perhaps suggesting the visual metaphor of the chimney itself as the cleft stick which grips everything in Hanky Park. The title of the whole book is taken from one of the short stories within, 'The Cleft Stick', which, as we shall see, explores just how constrained and inescapable life is in Hanky Park.

However, at first sight the end-paper illustrations seem to offer something of a switch in topic, for in the foreground they show a man and woman praying, while in the centre is a heraldic shield and to the left and right are further praying and kneeling figures, three male figures to the left and three female to the right. The shield depicts three heraldic bishop's mitres and is crowned by a further mitre (it is thus an accurate drawing of the shield of the Anglican diocese of Manchester, which includes Salford). The shield and the two main figures are bisected by a 'joint' that has lost its mortar, giving the impression that they are bas-relief carvings in stone, and presumably to be found on the interior of a church. The large praying figures look at first as if they are medieval or perhaps Renaissance tomb carvings, but the large male figure is on closer inspection wearing trousers hitched at the knee, boots and is in shirt-sleeves, belt and braces, with a modern haircut and drooping moustache. He clearly then is a twentieth-century working-man, though his working-clothes could date to anytime from 1900 onwards. This insight into his identity allows the viewer to reinterpret the female figure: though she could be a soberly dressed Tudor wife or widow, she is also in fact a Salford housewife wearing the traditional shawl over her head, and shoes which might be clogs. The whole illustration then is a kind of joke or observation about the ancient look of the workers of Salford and may imply that they are indeed trapped in a past that has not moved on: both figures have notably long-suffering and exhausted facial expressions and, in the 'cleft stick', prayer may be their only if fruitless recourse (figure 2). The industrial technology featured on the dust-wrapper has not led to any new and positive human possibilities within the world of the book.

This religious commentary, or perhaps rather this commentary on religion, since no efficacy is necessarily asserted, looks unusual for Greenwood in that religion, with the exception of what is explicitly exposed as the con-artistry of the séance, plays very little part in the novel of *Love on the Dole*. The end-papers might perhaps serve a comparable purpose to one of the few brief mentions of religious observance at the beginning of *Love on the Dole*, where such a framework is seen as one of several false comforters at best:

> On either side [are …] public houses by the score where forgetfulness lurks in a mug; pawnshops by the dozen where you can raise the wind to buy forgetfulness; churches, chapels and unpretentious mission halls where God is praised; nude, black patches of land, 'crofts', as they are called, water-logged, sterile, bleak and chill. (11)

However, it may also be that the illustration stems from Wragg's perceptions of the modern world and his own artistic practice which in his previous (as well as

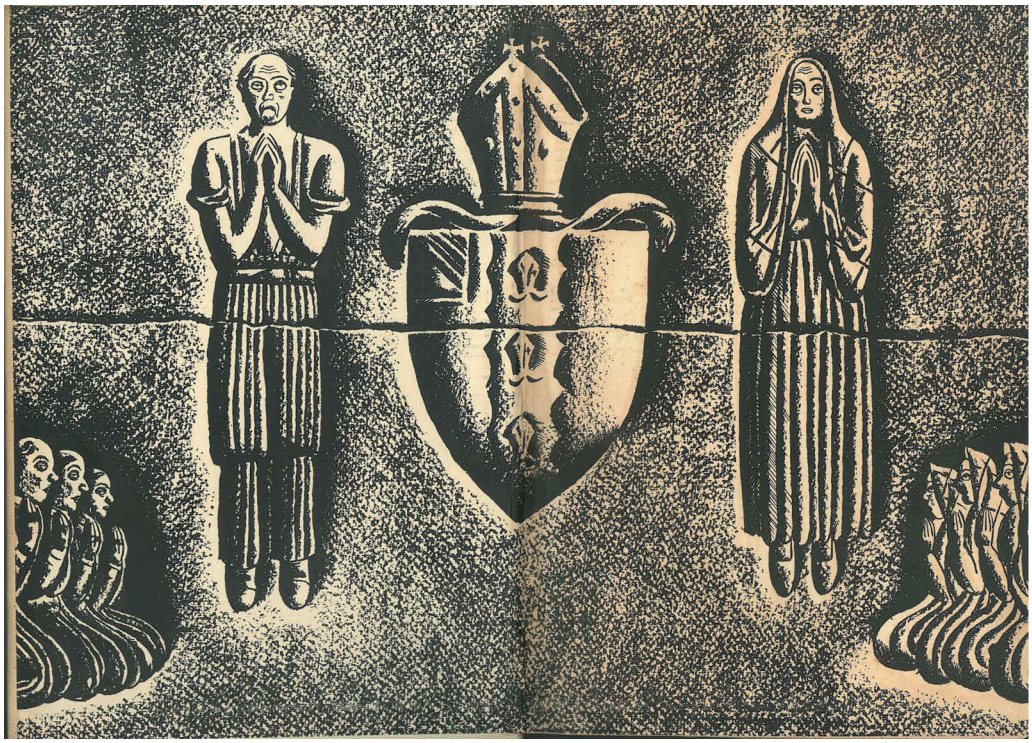

Figure 2. Arthur Wragg, printed endpapers for *The Cleft Stick* (1937). 25.5 × 35.0 centimetres.

later works) drew emphatically on visual comparisons between Christian iconography and the contemporary scene. For example, in his celebrated and controversial *The Psalms for Modern Life* (1933), Psalm 30 is illustrated with a full-page monochrome image titled with the verse 'And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved'. The image depicts against a densely dark background a bearded and satanic-seeming head atop a futurist factory, complete with dynamic smoking chimneys and a steaming locomotive, their smoke trails aligned (figure 3). Presumably, here Capitalism and Satan are aligned, and this is indeed a dark satanic mill.

As so often in Wragg's work, the relationship between biblical text (here itself one with a shifting mood) and his visual interpretation is complex and oblique, which may also be the case for the heraldic monumental end-papers of *The Cleft Stick*. *The Cleft Stick* does not in the main maintain a religious focus, but the end-papers and one significant story ('Magnificat') do, suggesting either some consequences of the artist's and writer's collaboration or perhaps some strands of religious interest in the original conception of *Love on the Dole* and Hanky Park which did not make it through to the novel version.

Indeed, none of the narratives of *The Cleft Stick* stories survives intact in the novel, which clearly had to rework the self-contained short story plots into a larger and continuous architecture, though some themes seem to survive this process of remaking better than others. Several of the characters in *Love on the Dole* are shared by *The Cleft Stick* and retain many of their characteristics, and often their associated themes, amplified, of course, by Wragg's illustrations. Thus, Ted Munter, Sam Grundy's side-kick in the

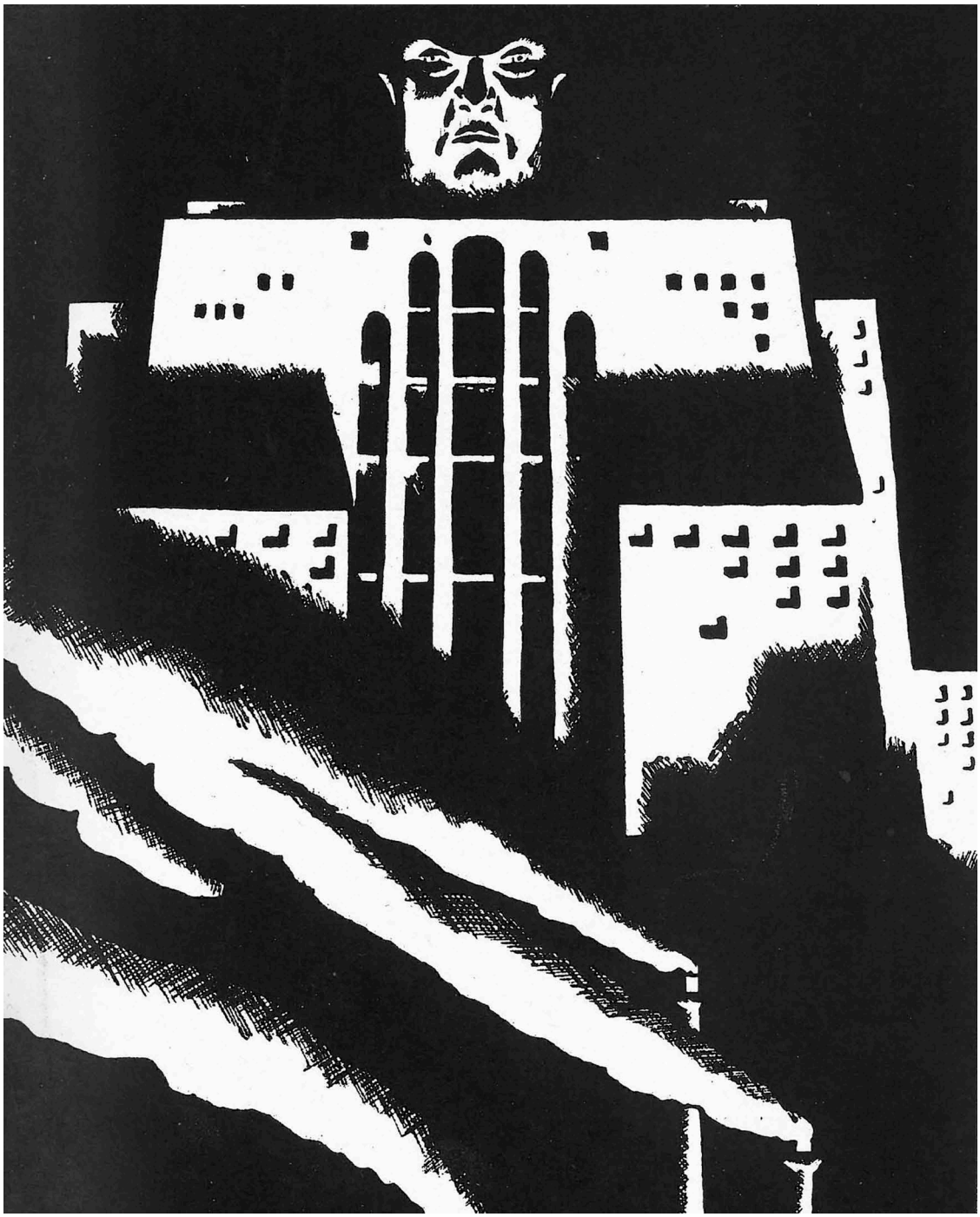

Figure 3. Arthur Wragg, *The Psalms for Modern Life* (London: Selwyn & Blount, 1933), print illustration to Psalm 30 (the book is unpaginated). 21.4 × 13.3 centimetres.

novel, is the central character of the first story, 'A Maker of Books', while the Scodger family, minor characters in the novel, have a whole story to themselves in 'Mrs Scodger's Husband'. The title story, 'The Cleft Stick', gives a more complete account of the awful life of Mrs Cranford, whose story is told in passing in the novel, and the final end of Blind Joe Riley,

who opens and closes the novel in his job as a human alarm-clock or 'knocker-up, is told in 'Joe Goes Home'. Ned Narkey, one of the villains of the novel, appears centre-stage as a serial exploiter of women in 'The Son of Mars', while two of the novel's chorus of older women, Mrs Dorbel and Mrs Nattle, are joined in 'The Practised Hand' by a third much less scrupulous and indeed murderous older woman who is not included in the novel at all, Mrs Haddock (Mrs Bull makes an appearance alone in 'the Cleft Stick'). Finally, the character of Harry in 'Any Bread, Cake or Pie?' bears a fairly distant relationship to Harry Hardcastle as a boy in the novel. Several stories and their characters have no substantial counterpart in the novel, including two centring on small shops and businesses in Hanky Park —these would perhaps have suggested a greater social range than the novel's almost single-minded focus on the fortunes of manual workers, first in employment and then falling into disaster through the loss of their jobs. The shops might suggest the possibility at least of individual success and social mobility—a way out of Hanky Park, which in the novel is seen as almost wholly entrapping. These two small-business stories are 'The Little Gold Mine' (which expands a passing reference in the novel to Mr Hulkington's grocery shop) and '"All's Well That Ends Well"' (which tells the story of 'Babson's High-Class Supper Bars', a business which does not make it into *Love on the Dole* in any form). It should also be noted that two key figures in the novel have little direct precedent in the short story collection: Larry Meath, the working-class intellectual and activist has no story, and there is no direct equivalent for Sally Hardcastle, the working-class woman who makes a desperate and appalling deal with the bookie Sam Grundy for the benefit of her male relatives and mother (though one might see a distant relationship between the end of Sally's story and the decision by Nance Glynne to marry, and then kill off, the well-off grocer, Mr Hulkington in *The Cleft Stick* story, 'The Little Gold Mine' (79–106). Equally, there are some parallels to Sally's story in another woman's story told in the story 'Magnificat' discussed below.

Clearly, there is not space to analyse Greenwood and Wragg's collaboration across all fifteen stories in the book, but within the unifying visual and thematic framework constituted by the dust wrapper, end-papers and book's title, I will explore in some detail how two characteristic stories use word and image to represent the world of Hanky Park in a different genre and different modes from those employed by the novel.[27] I have chosen these stories ('The Cleft Stick' and 'Magnificat') to reflect some of the different relationships between short story collection and novel material, as well as for their especially striking illustrations. The first of these expands upon a story that is partially referred to in the novel, while the second story has no close equivalent in the novel and explores a role for religion in Hanky Park. 'The Cleft Stick' was in fact the first story which Greenwood wrote, as he recalled in an interview in the 1970s, and was originally called by the more literal title of 'Jack Cranford's Wife'.[28] Though he did not place it first in *The Cleft Stick*, he clearly felt that its mood and title summed up the overall atmosphere of the whole collection.

The story narrates a day in most respects like every other day in the life of Mrs Cranford (we appropriately do not learn her first name, since she is

27 – However, I have provided a synopsis of each story on my Walter Greenwood blog-site, *Walter Greenwood: Not Just Love on the Dole*. Retrieved from https://waltergreenwood notjustloveonthedole.com/walter-greenwood-and-arthur-wraggs-the-cleft-stick-1937/.

28 – Walter Greenwood, 'Dole Cue', interviewed by Catherine Stott, *The Guardian* 2 April 1971, 10.

in most respects reduced by her circumstances solely to the generic functions of her married state). Mrs Cranford has three children and a husband on the dole, and she takes in washing as the only means to supplement the thirty shillings a week dole-money they have to live on. They owe money to the grocer and have not paid their rent for some time. The time period in the story is late afternoon till early evening, so that the children come home from school for their tea, followed by Jack who has at last got some work, but not yet been paid (father and children complain that they are hungry and correctly but ungratefully observe that that there is almost nothing to eat). Since they are frightened of their father, the squabbling children go to play in the street as soon as they can, while Jack asks for some dole to spend in the pub—but there is none left by this stage of the week and he goes out anyway, blaming his wife for bad management.

Though this is the plot sequence, its focus from the beginning in Mrs Cranford's point of view emphasizes these external and habitual events as registering somewhat remotely on the more important dramas taking place in Mrs Cranford's currently feverish and drifting inner world. At the opening, she feels she can physically go on no longer and soon finds herself in a momentarily convincing alternative mental world, of what would be to her utter content:

> SHE DROPPED THE BASKET OF WASHING ON THE RUG BEFORE the fire, flopped into the rocking-chair, sighed and closed her aching eyes. Her arms, wet to the elbows with lather, hung helplessly. Her mouth was open and her breathing laboured. A stupefied listlessness numbed her brain making everything vague as a waking dream. […] She closed her eyes and fancied herself preparing the meal. […] Shining crockery lay on the clean tablecloth, and a dish of ham and eggs, set on the hot plate, filled the kitchen with an appetising odour. (59–60)

At other points she daydreams of her childhood, and then of the fantastic delivery of an enormous load of coal to her rented house by a horse-drawn coal lorry (she can actually buy only enough to carry back home on foot in her apron). However, all her exhausted dreams are quickly interrupted by intrusive material realities in the shape of demands from children and husband and the need to finish her enormous burden of washing and ironing. Only one interruption is relatively if not uncomplicatedly cheering in that it pays some attention to Mrs Cranford's own well-being: her neighbour Mrs Bull comes to see if she can borrow her flat-irons, but sees that they are already in use. In passing though, Mrs Bull has time to gossip about her day and to observe that Mrs Cranford is not looking well—Mrs Cranford agrees: 'Back's nearly broke and I go dizzy and sweat like a bull' (67). Mrs Bull, is, as the story explains, a 'handywoman', that is someone who helps her working-class neighbours in return for fees by delivering babies (though she is not a qualified midwife) and by laying out the dead for burial. Mrs Bull laments that things are so bad that even she is hard up, since 'people aren't having the families they should' (66) (though that could not be said of the Cranford family).[29]

Mrs Bull seems to be the only source of medical knowledge in Hanky Park and she makes a diagnosis of one of the reasons why Mrs Cranford is feeling so bad: 'Why, it's your change o' life […] you won't have any more children […] it's a bad time for some women—makes 'em feel as though

29 – Mrs Bull's role as a 'handywoman' in the novel is discussed in Hopkins, *Walter Greenwood's Love on the Dole*, 72–75, 88–90.

they're going to kick the bucket' (67). This is news to Mrs Cranford—she has no knowledge at all of the menopause. Mrs Bull's advice is to abandon the ironing, have a glass of whisky and go to bed. Otherwise, she warns, Mrs Cranford will be like the thirty-two-year-old woman she recently laid out—menopause apart, her situation closely paralleled Mrs Cranford's and she used her gas oven to kills herself. This story does not have quite the effect that Mrs Bull intends, for Mrs Cranford is attracted to its possibilities: '"I never saw a face so peaceful as I washed her and laid her out". Mrs Cranford could feel the luxurious easefulness of death. No work, worry, pains or debts. Nothing. Her eyes closed with relief' (69). Mrs Cranford later wraps her shawl around her head and kneels with her head in the oven —but then recoils at the waste of gas, pouring out, 'costing money', till someone finds her body. But anyway there is another obstacle: she has no penny for the gas meter—this is one of the cleft sticks she is in. She takes Mrs Bull's advice—pawns her laundry and goes to the pub for a nip of liquor.

Wragg's illustration for the story is a double-page one (between 62 and 63), whose size, bleakness and relative paucity of subject matter is both impressive and appropriate to the story's focus on poverty and lack of alternatives (figure 4).

Wragg has chosen to draw the opening scene of the story, when Mrs Cranford flops into the rocking-chair utterly exhausted, feeling helpless and hopeless. That moment encapsulates, of course, not only her exhaustion at that moment but also the exhaustion of her whole life, of all the narratives which she can imagine—of all her dreams, as a girl, as a newly married woman, as a mother, the exhaustion of what are in fact modest hopes of adequate income, food, coal, gas, consideration from husband and children, sufficient rest and some leisure. Her face, lit from below by the unseen coal-fire, is deeply shadowed, as are her arms, apron, shoulders and hair. It is a dark world literally and metaphorically, with the human figure darker than the surroundings. However, the lighter portions of the drawing are not sources of contrasting hope, for the light only serves to show the ragged and patched textiles with which Mrs Cranford is surrounded, presumably the sheets which she has to wash and dry before the end of the day. The only other visible object is the washing basket on the floor which is also full of textiles and therefore unfinished work. This textile world which hems Mrs Cranford in seems matched to the way in which the story shows her trapped within her feminine role as wife and mother in the context of Hanky Park. We see her from an alienating viewing point above and while we are invited to empathize, her facial expression seems closed and blank so that it is difficult from the picture alone to enter into her world-view. Of course, the narrative allows us to expand upon the pictured moment, enabling us to supply the smaller and larger narratives which have preceded and which follow that moment in Mrs Cranford's life. But that imaged moment in fact is not a step on the way to further narrative development, but an overall picture of the story's narrative, for despite Mrs Cranford's attempt to escape her life, the cleft stick prevents her from moving beyond the domestic imprisonment which the illustration so strikingly creates, and the temporary effects of the nip of whisky will not alter much (the pawned

Figure 4. Arthur Wragg, print illustration to 'The Cleft Stick' (1937). 24.7 × 32.0 centimetres.

laundry will need to be redeemed very soon). This interpretation of life in Hanky Park as static and inescapable is, of course, like that suggested by the near identical opening and close of the novel, but notably more centred on the world of feminine domestic labour rather than on the world of paid employment for which the lucky ones are awoken every morning at five thirty in the morning by Joe Riley's knock.

'Magnificat' explores two aspects of Hanky Park to which the novel gives much less attention. The first of these is popular entertainment, which though referred to on several occasions in the novel is in the main beyond the reach of most characters for the majority of the narrative once they are on the dole. Early in the novel, Harry enjoys the cinema in the company of the other apprentices, and for Helen romance provides a wholly inadequate alternative to the miserable actuality provided by her parents' marriage:

> In all the wide world, of all the sweet dreams and fond imaginings of such homes as were writ or projected at the pictures, of them all, hers was that in North Street. […] The rest were words in a book, shadows flickering on a screen. […] Dully, insistently came the realisation that there was no escape, save in dreams […] reality was too hideous to look upon: it could not be shrouded or titivated for long by the reading of cheap novelettes or the spectacle of films of spacious lives. (65)

In 'Magnificat', we see young women eagerly interacting with a form of popular entertainment which has a much more physical reality, though this does not make it any less a form of wish-fulfilment. And just as Helen finds there are consequences for her acting out of dreams of romance with Harry Hardcastle, so too 'Magnificat' is about dreams and bodily consequences.

The story starts in what seems a far from religious milieu—the Palatine Dance Hall, where 'Billy Blake and his Melodious Rascals' is one of the

attractions. Of course another is that it is a place in Hanky Park to meet members of the opposite sex. However, some male attendees are discontent at the prominence at the dance hall of one of its employees, the Master of Ceremonies, Dick Winningham: 'What could girls see in him anyway?' (72). However, for some young women he is a source precisely of immediate visual enjoyment, with the promise of other pleasures: 'A tail suit, boiled shirt, flower in buttonhole, sleek hair, manicured nails, a motor car and—what a dancer!' (71). Their engagement with this physical form of popular entertainment is driven by other forms more fictional, as the narrator observes:

> To the eyes of the idolatrous girls he was the incarnation of that hero who appeared each week under a different name in the twopenny magazines for women, devoted exclusively to romance.
>
> Through the medium of the latter, life in the Two Cities […] was made more bearable: for the duration of the story one could forget the underpaid drudgery […] the limited shoddy wardrobe […] in vicarious enjoyment of the doings of people untouched by the merciless hand of economic necessity. […] After the story was finished […] one's mind naturally veered to the Palatine Dance Hall and Dick Winningham. (71)

His name, of course, suggests that he is from the young women's points of view 'winning'. However, though he certainly is successful with female Palatine attendees (and he seems to specialize in particularly young and inexperienced women), there are other ways in which he is not winning, for despite his appearance his sophistication does not run to awareness of contraception and he is already having to meet two paternity orders 'when two more of his conquests told him to expect a further depletion of his salary through the agency of the law in the not very distant future' (72). He swiftly departs from Salford 'without leaving a forwarding address.'

He is, we are told, soon forgotten and replaced by a successor, except by those women who have to live with the consequences of his exploitation of their dreams. One of these is Amy Wilkinson, formerly 'one of the merriest girls in the mill' (73), who fears the worst as a result of going out with Dick in his motor car. This is her cleft stick. She has heard of a back-street abortionist, but also that it would cost three pounds—an impossible sum. She cannot face telling her parents and like Mrs Cranford, she contemplates suicide, but this time in the canal:

> Was it not strange that if you did away with yourself your father and mother would be sorry and probably would say that, whatever you had done would not have mattered. If only she could drown herself and not drown herself so that she could return when they were declaring their remorse. (74)

However, unable to go through with suicide, in the end she has to tell her parents, who react more or less as she thought they would, but perhaps less vehemently than she feared. They both immediately invoke the language of respectability, which focuses much more on their status in the community than hers:

> 'Haven't you got no respect for your mother and father?'
>
> 'Doing a thing like that to us. What will the neighbours say?'

> 'To think that a daughter of mine would have brought disgrace on us.' (75–76)

Amy's situation somewhat corresponds to that of Helen Hawkins in *Love on the Dole*, except that Helen has Harry Hardcastle to marry and that her unrespectable parents would probably regard premarital pregnancy as normal for Hanky Park. Though the situation is different, the scene and its language actually correspond closely to the scene in the novel when Sally Hardcastle's parents discover that she has agreed to become Sam Grundy the Bookie's mistress (in fact only to ease the dire poverty of her family).

However, Amy's mother who is the more sympathetic parent also tells her a sad and hard economic and social fact of which she has not thought: 'Do you realise that you'll never be able to get married now?' (76). Amy then realizes that her more exotic romantic dreams have robbed her of the key to a more material romance-narrative available to working-class girls:

> The future stretched into infinity unrelieved. Her generation, her friends at the mill, all would have homes of their own, husbands to care for them, would have futures such as one reads and dreams of. For her there was not to be a future, nothing to live for. (76)

This realization is, though, succeeded by much less conventional thoughts: 'She was to be a mother in the future […] that meant she would have a baby—of her own. It would be hers, would not belong to anybody else. […] Oh, this was a marvellous, exciting discovery' (76–77). She knows that this is not a way of thinking about her situation which anyone else in her community will understand, and that she must outwardly perform the rituals of respectability: 'She *must* pretend to be ashamed: nobody must ever know that a song was in her heart, that music was in the world again' (77).

This is the point in the story at which its title begins to be invoked, for Amy, who has not been to church for a long time, searches for her Anglican prayer book, hoping to find something which will express her joy, 'something special, something different, quite unique' (77). She finds a bookmark from the last time she attended an evening service, which marks (providentially?) the Magnificat:

> 'My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden. For, behold, from henceforth—'. […] She knew the words by heart […] but never, until now, had they meant anything to her [… she] sobbed to know that she now was safe beyond the touch of the world. (77–78)

The last words quoted conclude the story. But how are we to read them and indeed the story as a whole? Positive and more ironic interpretations both seem possible. If Amy really derives actual comfort from the Magnificat and foresees a way of living her life on her own, unconventional terms, then she is one of the few characters in this short story collection to find any escape from 'the cleft stick'. It is notable that even before finding the text of the Magnificat, Amy has found a highly individualistic joy in the thought that this baby is hers and nobody else's (it seems now that Dick Winningham is so deeply absent in every way that in her mind the baby is indeed the result of parthenogenesis). In fact she sees the baby as giving her

an unassailable inner identity, which will stand up to the merely 'customary attitude' to the unmarried mother. The Magnificat celebrates this conviction, in some ways lending the socially approved support of religion to a situation which is normally socially condemned at this period.

However, this positive interpretation seems very uncharacteristic of Greenwood's writing about Hanky Park in either short story or novel form, in which the dominant note is that there is no genuine escape, and that dreams of escape (romance, the cinema, betting) offer only temporary palliation from the harsh 'realities' of economic and social hierarchy. The only exceptions to this rule in the novel are Sam Grundy who, a man of working-class origin, has found a way of making money from his fellows and their dreams, and who can escape to his house in Wales; and Sally Hardcastle, who can escape Hanky Park only through an appallingly hard bargain with Sam in which he sexually exploits her poverty and care for her family. Equally, if positively interpreted, the story is unlike anything else in Greenwood's Hanky Park in seeing value in religion—even if its beliefs are somewhat unconventionally applied. In *Love on the Dole* the only broadly 'religious' activity after the brief reference to churches in the first scene-setting chapter is the séance, which is also confused with fortune-telling, conducted by Ma Jikes, with the assistance of Mrs Dorbell and Mrs Bull. The novel partly presents this activity as free entertainment, which characters such as Mrs Bull do not take seriously, and which is a source of comedy for the reader. But it also shows it up as a kind of con-artistry, yet another way in which the older women exert their power and glean useful intelligence for their various low-level money-making schemes in Hanky Park. It is noticeable that in fact the séance in the novel does have a precedent in 'Magnificat'. After Amy first fears that she is pregnant, she pays Mrs Jikes sixpence to read her fortune in a scene very reminiscent of that in *Love on the Dole* when Sally reluctantly has her fortune told by Mrs Jikes. Amy seems to believe completely in Mrs Jikes' powers, which might suggest to the reader her capacity for uncritical belief.

Indeed, a more negative, ironic, reading of 'Magnificat' would be to see Amy as temporarily escaping the likely reality of being an unmarried mother through the false and temporary comforts offered by her individual application of a biblical precedent. The concluding words of the story, 'she now was safe beyond the touch of the world' (78), could suggest that religion is a real presence, which unlike her earlier belief in the romance magazine, cinema and Dick Winningham, really can take her out of 'the merciless hand of economic necessity' (71). Or this apparently happy ending (and this somewhat ominous closing phrase, which again could invoke suicide?) could suggest instead that religion is yet another form of romance which can never really modify reality.

Wragg's illustration is placed after the first two pages of the story and inevitably offers its perspective on the story (figure 5). The image is a head and shoulders portrait of a young woman wearing a shawl with a large checked pattern, subdivided further by closely drawn/woven horizontal lines. This broad pattern of shawl recurs in images of women in several other of Wragg's illustrations to the book, and photographs of female mill workers from the nineteenth century until the Second World War confirm

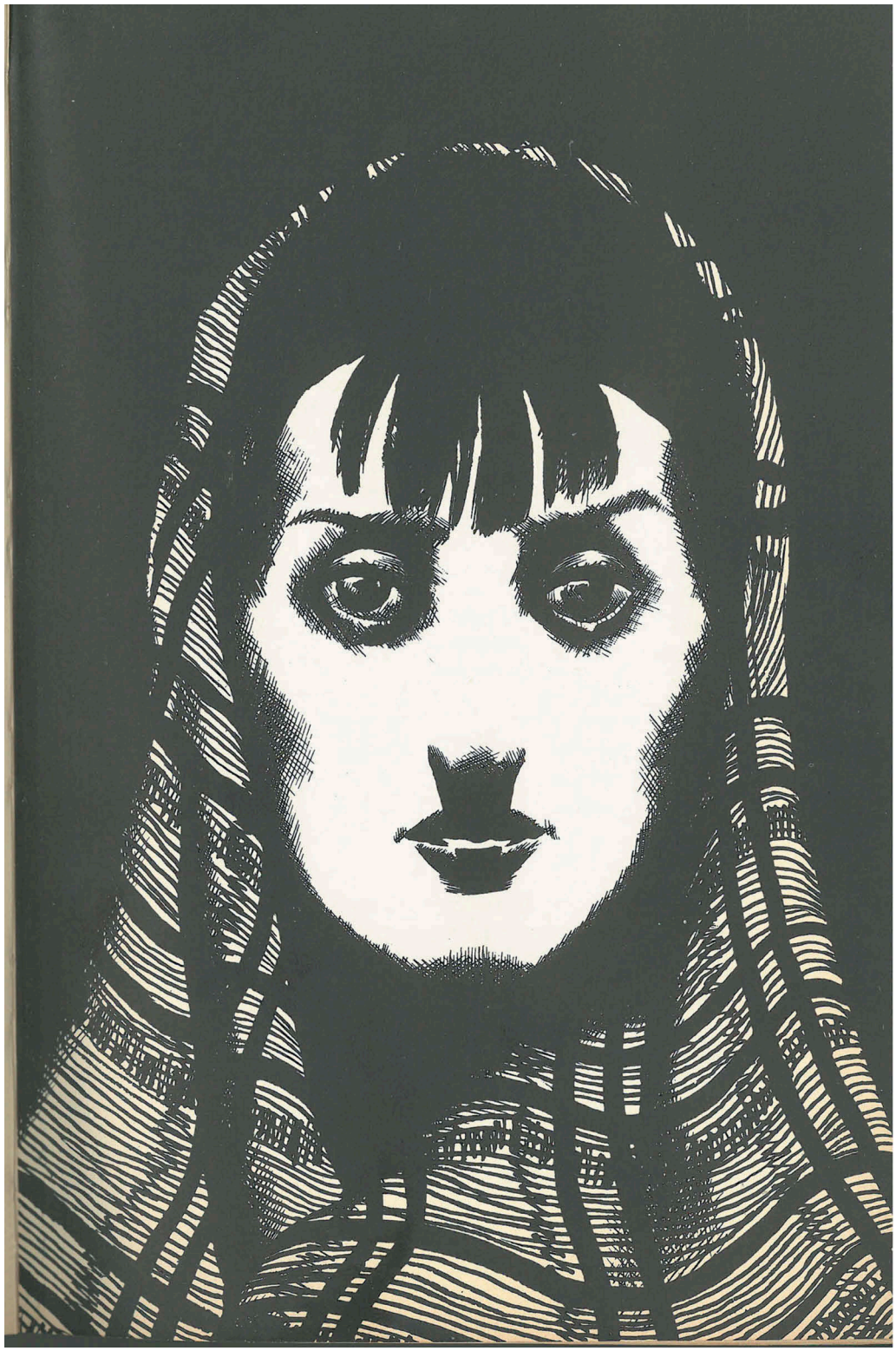

Figure 5. Arthur Wragg, print illustration to 'Magnificat' (1937). 24.5 × 16.5 centimetres.

that it was of a common pattern worn for work. However, in this image the drawing of the patterned shawl particularly contributes to a gradation of dark and light. The background to the portrait head is wholly black, and in severe contrast to the woman's face which in parts is wholly white, while the shawl's smaller scale contrasts mediate to an extent between the two larger and opposite expanses of background and face. The absolute whiteness of the facial area (apart from the still darkly shadowed eyes and the fringe of black hair) give the effect of the woman being brightly lit from a source completely level with her face. In a curious effect, the woman's nose, apart from its lower tip, is not drawn at all, as if so brightly lit that it disappears, giving a somewhat alien effect, as of a face not conventionally human.

At this point of the text, the reader has not yet met Amy Wilkinson as an individual, since Dick Winningham's 'conquests' are presented as part of an anonymous production line (Amy is first named on the page following this illustration; 73). Nor has the reader met any reference to religion, the setting being clearly contemporary and secular. Nevertheless, this image is the first in the book to pick up the visual play on resemblances between shawls and nuns or perhaps ancient biblical habits brought out in the illustrations on the end-papers, and thus the illustration suggests both a more contemporary Lancashire female textile worker and a potentially religious image (perhaps generically resembling those of women in the Holy Land in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century illustrated Bibles?). Certainly, the shawled woman seems to be from a different and older world relative to that of the Palatine Dance Hall, and the reader does already have one key religious reference in the title of the story, which might suggest that this image has a relationship to representations of the Virgin Mary. The Magnificat itself is, of course, one of the most ancient of Christian hymns and is found early in the Gospel of Luke (1: 46–55). Mary has just received the 'Annunciation' from the Angel Gabriel that she is to be the mother of God, and then makes her 'Visitation' to her cousin Elisabeth, who is also after long barrenness with child after her husband Zacharias has been visited by an angel while praying in the temple. Mary then sings or declaims the hymn to celebrate the mercy and mightiness of God. Both the 'Annunciation' and the 'Visitation' (the latter most closely linked to the Magnificat) were, of course, moments regularly depicted by medieval and Renaissance painters, so readers (and the artist) might also have some potential visual images to associate with the story's title. However, it is notable that Wragg's drawing does not resemble at all closely any well-known paintings of the Visitation, which naturally enough show Mary and Elisabeth together, and as full-length portraits. His image is in contrast a close-up (and indeed one might see his drawing as influenced by film), perhaps stressing the individuality of his subject—or her solitude. This would fit with the narrative's ambiguous portrayal of Amy's inner state after reading the Magnificat—it may depict her inner strength she could find nowhere else in Hanky Park or it may show her temporary acceptance of a comfort which will not last. The bright lighting level with the figure's face might show her individual and unshakeable (quasi-religious?) enlightenment, but could perhaps also show her facing a harsh and desperate reality without real understanding. At this point in the text, the reader

would not know exactly what further there is to happen in the story, though on page seventy-two they will have read the paragraph in which Dick flees the Two Cities, so they might have some sense that abandoned women are likely to be a topic. But unusually for Greenwood, as we have seen, this story does not resolve its ambiguity at the closure of the text, so that in fact this image (of hope or of the desperation of the cleft stick) remains one which sums up the whole story's lack of clear closure.

The uses of word and image in these two stories illustrate some of the characteristic themes and techniques of *The Cleft Stick*, and also indicate how the short story with images format produced a different and sometimes more ambiguous narrative effect from the generally more didactic and fully explained narrative of the novel, *Love on the Dole*. There is, as we have seen, a good deal of shared material between the two texts, but also some notable differences which open up new perspectives on Greenwood's work and on his forgotten and rich collaboration with Wragg. The reception of the collaboration suggests that it was seen as a significant work in its time, though there were differences of view about the contribution of word and image, and also about the politics of the volume—some certainly saw it as less politically tactful and giving harsher perspectives than *Love on the Dole*. There is much more to investigate both in *The Cleft Stick* itself, and in comparison with Greenwood's more famous novel, but this essay marks a beginning in rediscovering this lost and major working-class text and in drawing it to the attention of critics, literary and artistic, and potentially, new readers (ideally, there should be a new edition). *The Cleft Stick* suggests that Greenwood was a much more complex writer than it is sometimes assumed, who was capable of producing quite different solutions to the problem of representing Hanky Park in fiction, and who was perhaps originally more focussed on the female experience of life in Hanky Park. Confining study of Greenwood's work to only one novel has constrained our understanding of his contribution to the representation and discussion of working-class life in Britain in the 1930s. There was not so much working-class work published in the 1930s that we can afford totally to forget such a once well-known and aesthetically interesting collaboration between a successful working-class writer and successful working-class artist.

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